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catalogue

The Staff Newsletter of the Ministry of Community and Social Services

In this issue:

A SPECIAL REPORT ON SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REFORM: Social assistance reform bill moves ahead/Quick facts about Ontario Works/Quick facts about the OOSP	2
Frontline workers learn about Ontario Works/ Guides released at update meeting /New PA Kless	3
QRC to cater to seniors/Estimating disability	3
TECHNOLOGY TIPS/Award of excellence at CPRI PEOPLE AND PLACES/IN MEMORIAM	4

Adieu to Sandy, salutations to Sue

The ministry is losing **Sandy Lang** as deputy, but her replacement will be a familiar face.

Sandy becomes Deputy Minister at Health July 18, and **Sue Herbert**, the Assistant Deputy Minister, Program Management, will move down the hall to the DM's office.

Sue joined the ministry in 1979 as a program supervisor in Barrie and has held progressively responsible positions. She has also worked in the Toronto Area Office, in children's services and operational co-ordination.

Sue left MCSS for 1½ years to become an ADM with the Ministry of Housing, and returned in 1993 as ADM.

Sue has a diploma in social services and has also studied at the University



Sue Herbert

of Toronto and the Ontario College of Art. She and her husband Ken have three children.

New process earns rave reviews



Julia Nizyniak photo

The team who put the new Monthly Reporting/Auto Hold system in place at the Burlington Local Office: Jean Lederer, Harold Isbister, Sharon deCouto, Melanie Stratham and Kristine Tape. Burlington was one of five phase-in sites for the new process, which is going province-wide this month.

An automated improvement to income maintenance has been launched with great success in five Family Benefits office sites and goes province-wide this month.

The project, called the Monthly Reporting/Auto Hold Enhancement, was phased in at the Burlington, Sault Ste. Marie, Owen Sound, Windsor Local and Windsor Integrated offices, where it has earned rave reviews from staff.

Under the current system, Family Benefits clients must submit a monthly statement, called the Employment/Training Income Report, or E/TIR, to report any earned income. If a client doesn't submit a statement, staff put a manual hold on the benefit cheque until the statement is received. This costs money and is time-consuming.

With the auto-hold enhancement, clients submit a pre-printed card to report earned income. If the card is not submitted by a certain date, the computerized system automatically holds the benefits cheque back. The system automatically releases the hold once the information is received. It also terminates benefits after two consecutive holds.

The new methods help reduce over- and under-payments, reduce administrative costs and provide better customer service. They simplify the process of reporting earned income and make clients more responsible about monthly reporting, and less time is spent by staff on verifying income.

At the Windsor Integrated site, income maintenance district manager **David Baker** says the wage-earning clients responded well to the reporting requirements. Before the new process, as many as 40 per cent of wage earners were reporting late, he says. "Now it's

down to only four per cent."

In Sault Ste. Marie, income maintenance manager **Debbie Boulet** is enthusiastic about the improvements. "In our office, we had been practicing a manual hold process since 1992," she notes. The auto-hold/auto-terminate features have reduced the processing workload with E/TIR processing and improved staff efficiency.

These CIMS enhancements were developed with the help of the Enhancement and Special Project (E&SP) Group—a sub-division of Information Systems Branch—headed by co-ordinator **Frank Lee**, and by Systems Support, headed by **Charlie Styga**. This project was a ministry initiative and implemented jointly with the Business Transformation Project.

Sandra Richardson, income maintenance supervisor in Owen Sound, praises the careful planning that took place prior to implementation: "It's a prime example of the kind of forethought that should go into all initiatives." Burlington income maintenance supervisor **Kristine Tape** concurs and adds: "It's been successful in promoting client awareness and responsibility." And, the new process "has been a very positive experience for clients as well as staff," says **Kathy McLean**, income maintenance supervisor at the Windsor Local Office.

Phase-in site staff have some tips for other offices to help ensure a successful launch for the new process:

- bring client case files up to date;
- make sure clients are well-informed of the new reporting requirements (there's an information package just for them);
- plan for contingencies;
- inform and train staff.

Corporate Human Resources Branch got into the swing of

things at its annual branch meeting at Queen's Park June 17 with a mini-putt game for the United Way. Obstacles on the imaginatively-planned course were built around a human resources theme.

Hugh MacLellan won the "Human Resources Masters"



green jacket for his winning golf score. Topics covered at the

branch meeting included future directions of human resources, the ministry business plan and customer service. In the photo, **Jill Sawchuk** keeps score as **Joyde Gibbs** takes a shot; players **Elaine Wentt** and **Anna Branicky** keep

their eyes on the ball. Seen in the background is **Lara Trimble**.

Better Beginnings brightens kids' futures



The Better Beginnings, Better Futures initiative is continuing to invest in children, with an announcement in April that the program will receive \$4.6 million annually. Minister **Janet Ecker** toured the Kingston project site

in April, where she learned of the community's enthusiasm for the program.

In the photo, **Carol Crill Russell**, policy analyst for BBBF, holds a wall hanging presented to ministry staff on the tour.

Social assistance reform bill moves ahead

by Julia Naczynski

On June 12th, Minister **Janet Ecker** introduced Bill 142 — a bill to reform social assistance. The proposed legislation would create two acts: the *Ontario Works Act* and the *Ontario Disability Support Program Act*. The bill received first reading, and second reading is expected to take place in August.

This marks the first new legislation to be introduced by our ministry since the *Child and Family Services Act* in 1984.

In her statement in the legislature, the minister made a point of thanking staff for their significant efforts in developing the new legislation. Then Deputy Minister **Sandra Lang** also expressed her appreciation for the on-going commitment and professionalism of staff in her e-mail detailing the day's announcement.

If adopted as proposed, the *OHA* and *ODSPA* would replace the *Family Benefits Act* (1966), the *General Welfare Assistance Act* (1958), and the *Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act* (VRS).

The cost of assistance would be shared by the province (80 per cent) and the municipalities (20 per cent). The costs of administration (such as salaries and forms) would be shared 50/50 between the province and municipalities. There would be no cost to municipalities for the supports to employment component of the ODSP.

The legislation would change how these programs are delivered:

- Ontario Works would be delivered by the municipalities.
- A Social Benefits Tribunal would replace the Social Assistance Review Board to address complaints or disputes after an internal review process has taken place.
- The income support component of the ODSP would continue to be delivered by MCSS. The supports to employment component would be community-based and delivered by service co-ordinators selected through a competitive process. Agencies would continue to be major service providers in the area of disability-specific pre-employment and employment services. Contracts with agencies delivering employment-related services would be managed by local service co-ordinators. See the "Quick Facts" stories for more details about the two programs.

MCSS senior management recognizes that this is a time of uncertainty for staff delivering social assistance. The new proposals do not immediately impact on staff or jobs. The ministry will continue to keep staff informed.

It is expected that, after second reading, the bill would be sent to a legislative standing committee for public hearings. Amendments to the bill could be made by the committee, after which there is a third reading and debate takes place in the legislature. A vote is held and the bill becomes law if passed.



Photo: Richard Stewart/Photography, Haliburton

Minister Janet Ecker has been visiting many Ontario Works sites, meeting ministry staff and others who are working hard to implement Ontario Works. Visits have included Cambridge, Clinton and Goderich in Waterloo/Huron counties, and in the north, Timiskaming District and Timmins. In Kirkland Lake (Timiskaming District), staff who toured the site were, from left, Timmins program supervisor Dan McManus, Timmins district manager Denis Lozier, Minister Janet Ecker, North Bay area manager Cynthia Lees and Louise Lamarche, Ontario Works area lead.

Quick Facts: Ontario Works

- Ontario Works was announced on June 12, 1996, by then-Minister **David Tsubouchi**; exactly one year later, Minister **Janet Ecker** introduced the legislation that will enact Ontario Works.
- A new legislative framework is needed to enable the government to fully implement the Ontario Works program — that's why the *Ontario Works Act* has been introduced.
- In the last 12 months, more than 30 municipalities began to implement aspects of Ontario Works programming. This represents more than two-thirds of the provincial employable caseload.
- The number of people receiving social assistance varies from month to month. In June there were 307,069 Family Benefits cases (662,004 people) and 270,500 General Welfare cases (486,500 people) for a total of 1,156,789 people (recipients and their dependents).
- Participation in Ontario Works would be mandatory for employable persons, including single parents whose children are in school.
- The number of agents delivering assistance would be reduced from about 200 to roughly 50. This would eliminate unnecessary administration and bureaucracy.
- Under Ontario Works, delivery agents (such as a municipality or district social services administration board) would use a single, province-wide technology system, now under development.
- The new law would:
 - provide the authority for the ministry and each delivery agent to establish a social assistance fraud control unit;
 - recognize the role of eligibility review officers in investigating a person's past or present eligibility for assistance;
 - allow an administrator to designate family support workers to help Ontario Works applicants and recipients and their dependents.
- The new law would give municipalities the option to use new technologies to verify people's identities (sometimes called finger-scanning or biometrics). These methods would help distinguish between individuals with the same last name and birthday, and those making false or multiple claims.

Quick facts: the ODSP

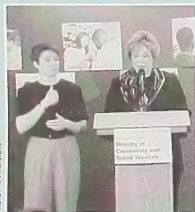


Photo: Ian Kurland

Minister Janet Ecker announced the proposed ODSP at Goodwill Industries in Toronto June 5. To the left is sign-language interpreter Maureen Byrne.

- The proposed Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), announced by Minister **Janet Ecker** on June 5, would take people with disabilities out of the welfare system and into a program that meets their unique needs.
- The new program would eliminate the system that identifies people as "permanently unemployable"

(PUE) and provide new eligibility criteria.

- Under the proposal, a person would be eligible for income assistance if s/he had:
 - substantial restrictions in one or more of the activities of daily living of personal care, function in the community and the workplace; and
 - restrictions that are a direct result of a major, continuous or recurrent, physical or mental impairment expected to last one year or more.
- There are two components to the proposed program: income support and supports to employment. Participation in the latter is voluntary.
- People eligible for benefits under FBA at the time the ODSP comes into effect would have their benefits protected.
- Currently there are 162,000 cases receiving Family Benefits in the disabled or PUE categories.

Front-line workers learn about Ontario Works



Tecumseh trainers Bruce Schumaker and Kathleen Goldstrom lead a training session for municipal workers from Hamilton and Niagara.

Training to familiarize municipal and provincial front-line workers with Ontario Works has been ongoing since January. The training is being held in municipalities as their business plans for Ontario Works are approved or are close to being approved.

As of the end of June, about 1,400 workers had taken the two-day orientation session. At the end of the year, about 3,500 municipal and provincial workers will have taken the initial training, says Inez Murdoch, education co-ordinator in the Employment Programs Branch.

The training covers the basic principles of Ontario Works. It also covers the fundamental shift of the program's goals from determining client eligibility to a focus on employment assistance: helping people find the shortest route to paid employment.

The training explores the labour market; reviews ways to help clients identify their strengths and build an employment action plan through a participation agreement; and provides other resources and tools that will help front-line workers help their clients on the road back to work. During the two days, workers use case studies to examine various options available to clients under Ontario Works. Group exercises give workers a chance to better understand their roles and

responsibilities in implementing Ontario Works.

After the training, workers should be able to deliver Ontario Works with a greater level of understanding and confidence using a set of helpful tools and applications.

The Employment Programs Branch has a role in providing the training and tools that will assist workers in making the transition to Ontario Works, says Inez. After a request for proposals, this was contracted to Tecumseh and Canadian Career Development Foundation, an Ottawa-based firm with a track record for education and training consultation.

John Wiebe, the employment program supervisor in the London Area Office responsible for Ontario Works, says the training session he attended was well-received by the attendees. At the end of the two days, participants felt that "this project can make a significant difference in the lives of the people that we serve," he says. "People felt it was two days well spent. People were still talking about the experience" as they went out the door.

Toni Lazar, training co-ordinator for Hamilton-Wentworth Community Services, said the training is very good and "everybody's getting the same message." Putting the focus on employability is "a huge change for us," she said.

Guides released at meeting

MCSS hosted its third joint meeting with its Ontario Works municipal partners on May 21. These meetings are held regularly to update participants about the implementation of Ontario Works and to exchange ideas and best practices. MCSS corporate and area office staff also participate.

So far more than 30 municipalities have received final approval of their business plans and have begun implementation of Ontario Works (representing more than two-thirds of the total provincial employable caseload). More than 20,000 social assistance recipients have already participated in one or more mandatory Ontario Works activities.

Participants were provided with two new reports to assist in program implementation - *Meeting Provincial Standards: A Tool Kit of Best Practices* and *The Employment Placement Component of Ontario Works: A Best Practices Study*. Copies of the new *Ontario Works Local Marketing Kit* were also released to meeting participants, which outlines Ontario Works communications objectives and lists the ministry supports that are available, including local event opportunities and on-line access to public information. Also released were three new brochures - *Ontario Works and You*, *Community Placements - A Component of Ontario Works*, and *Looking for a Job - Tips From Your Ontario Works Program*.

New PA appointment

Frank Klees, MPP for York-Mackenzie, was appointed Parliamentary Assistant to MCSS Minister Janet Ecker in April. The post is also held by Chatham-Kent MPP Jack Carroll.

Mr. Klees was elected to the Ontario Legislature on June 8, 1995, and prior to this appointment he was Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources. He has also served on the Standing Committee on Resource Development and the Standing Committee on the Administration of Justice.

Mr. Klees is a former chair of the Unemployment Insurance Commission Appeals Board, a co-founder and executive vice-president of Municipal Gas Corporation and has been active in his community and in local ratepayers' associations, and as a team sponsor of amateur sports.

Mr. Klees will be playing a leading role in the months ahead in



Frank Klees

communicating the principles and value of Ontario Works across the province, and helping to promote the development of community placements.

Executive assistant Louise O'Connor can be reached at 416-325-8850. The fax is 416-325-5295 and the general office number is 416-325-8934.

Estimating how many people have a developmental disability

by Julia Naczynski

How many people are there in Ontario who have a developmental disability?

In the past, the figure that's been quoted has been as high as three per cent of the total population; the generally-accepted percentage used by researchers and planners was one per cent.

Using existing ministry databases, and allowing for a few assumptions, we now have a better idea of the number.

It's actually less than either of those percentages - roughly .56 per cent, or about 63,000 Ontarians, to put a number on it - based on the estimated July 1995 population of 11.1 million Ontarians. These figures are in line with previous ministry research based on a different calculation method.

This updated figure was determined by Michael Nuyen, a policy analyst with the Developmental Services Branch, after a data analysis using information collected with the assistance of MCSS and Ministry of Education and Training staff. This figure represents an estimate of instances in which individuals have received the label "developmental disability" in one form or another. The details are available in a research paper, "What is the prevalence of Ontarians labelled as having a developmental disability?"

The use of a more accurate figure helps to guide policy for services to individuals with a developmental disability. A reliable number helps the ministry to make better decisions involving resource allocation - especially now when we are working toward a comprehensive community-based service system.

The differences in previously-published figures are due to definitions of "developmental disability" that have changed over the years, and the methods that have been used to count individuals. Some definitions of developmental disability have included different measurements of IQ (intelligence quotient), and may or may not include indicators of "adaptive behaviour" which is another determinant of developmental need. And there are many different ways of counting individuals: census data may under-report the prevalence of developmental disability if families simply don't identify a family member as having a mental handicap.

If you would like a copy of the research paper, contact *Dialogue* with your name and a fax number, your e-mail or regular mailing address.

ORC to cater to seniors

An agreement has been reached for the sale of part of Oxford Regional Centre for development into a retirement community.

About 230 acres of ORC land on the west side of Highway 59 near Woodstock is to be re-developed by Sally Creek Environments Corporation, part of Core Corporation of Canada.

When fully built, the site will support up to 1,700 residents. The project will provide a full range of accommodations for seniors, from independent living in private homes to an on-site retirement home with nursing care.

Some of the older buildings will be retained and renovated, including the power plant, administration building, the cottages, Hilltop House and the Engineer's Residence.

It's expected that about 250 permanent jobs will be created, along with temporary jobs during the construction.

ORC was closed in June 1996.



TECHNOLOGY TIPS

FROM INFORMATION
SYSTEMS BRANCH

TeamLinks Version 2.7 is here

TeamLinks Version 2.7, the ministry's new e-mail software, has been successfully operating in the Information Systems Branch since the end of January.

The software allows users to exchange mail messages and transfer various file formats (WordPerfect, Word, Lotus, Excel) across the network. PC files and All-in-1 files are easily managed with TeamLinks. Documents can be converted to and from a variety of formats such as WordPerfect and Word, and are easily backed up to local storage.

Some key points we have learned during this pilot period are included here to assist other branches with their implementation.

- TeamLinks is electronic mail software and should only be used for simple, brief, unformatted e-mail messages. The TeamLinks text editor is so basic that you must type your e-mail messages very simply (i.e., no indents, bolding, tabs, etc.). It is recommended that you create **all** your documents in WordPerfect or Word and then attach them to very brief e-mail messages.
- When initially creating e-mail in TeamLinks, check the list box situated under **Subject**: to make sure that the **TEXT** option is selected. Do not select the **RICH TEXT** option when creating e-mail as **only** staff who use Word software will be able to read your mail messages.
- The **INBOX** may or may not be displayed when you have new mail. If it isn't, you need to double-click on your **MAIN** folder to refresh the

index; your **INBOX** should now be displayed. **TIP:** Use <Ctrl>+<Home> OR depress the **Previous Drawer** button to move the cursor to the top of the index.

- To move quickly to a folder you want to work with, type the first character of the folder name you want. The cursor will move to the first folder in the index starting with the character you typed.
- For best results when printing e-mails with attached documents, it is recommended that you launch the document (double-click on the attachment) and print the document from within the software.
- If you have a personal computer, it is recommended that you save your documents to your PC's hard drive rather than to your ALL-in-1 File Cabinet. Here's why:
- If a problem should develop with either the network or ALL-in-1, you can continue to create, edit and print your documents on your PC. Once the problem is rectified, you can resume using e-mail.
- The ministry's future direction is to migrate its information products and services from its distributed computing environment to the desktop. Moving your information storage to your desktop now may assist you as we progress to newer technologies.

For further information about this topic please contact **Cheryl Rouse** at (416) 327-1095 (on e-mail, it's rouse_c@hist2hal1.ccssmhs).

IN MEMORIAM: Dan Hewitt

Dan Hewitt passed away peacefully after a brief illness on April 3, 1997. He was 48.

Dan was with the Communications and Marketing Branch at Queen's Park in the Briefings and Issues Unit for several years. Dan was born in Jamaica and was a teacher at St. George's High School prior to emigrating to Canada in the early 1970s.

Dan was community-oriented and was a volunteer with several organizations, including the Black Cap.

Dan was the son of the late Mary Jane and Frederick Hewitt. He is survived by four sisters and one brother, and a niece. He is also



Dan Hewitt

survived by dearest friend Jackie McAlister of Toronto.

Memorial donations may be made to the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention, 790 Bay Street, 9th floor, Unit 940, Toronto M5G 1N8.

People and Places

Doug Hayman has been appointed Director of the Management Support Branch, replacing **Barry**



Whalen while he is on secondment to the Who Does What implementation team. While Doug is at Queen's Park, **Terry McCarthy** is the acting Hamilton Area Office manager until a competition is held. The **Who Does What** office is located at 56 Wellesley St., 12th floor, Toronto; the general telephone number is 416-325-5344; fax is 416-325-5423; **Barry's** executive assistant is **Tim Young** (416-325-5388).

Robert Miller has left the Communications and Marketing Branch after 11 years with the ministry to join the Ontario Film Development Corporation, where he is Manager of Program Information.

The **Provincial Training Unit** of Management Support Branch has moved to 90 Sheppard Avenue East, 4th floor, North York M2N 3A1. You can reach Provincial Training Co-ordinator **Jane Gregory** at 416-327-4676 and **Janice Kwok**, Secretary at 416-325-5472; the fax is 416-325-9118.

The **Ottawa Area Office** units that were located at 1 Nicholas Street,

Suite 710, have moved. The **Child Care Unit** (page 155 of the Government of Ontario Telephone Directory), the Vocational Rehabilitation Services unit (page 156) and the Ontario Works office (formerly Employment Programs - page 156) are now located at 10 **Rideau Street, 4th floor, Ottawa K1N 9J1**. They can all be reached at tel. 613-231-1188.

The **Stratford Local Office** has moved from Ontario Street. The new address is **581 Huron Street, Stratford N5A 5T8**. The telephone and fax numbers are the same (page 148 of directory).

The **Kapuskasing Office** has moved from Queen Street. The new address is **6A Ash Street, Kapuskasing P5N 2C8**. Telephone is 705-335-6108; 800-424-3382; and fax, 705-337-5668 (page 162 of directory).

The **Timmins District Office** moved from the Elm St. site in May. The new mailing address is **MCSS, Ontario Government Complex, Hwy. 101 East, P.O. Bag #3040, South Porcupine P0N 1H0**. This covers Probation, YRS, Administration, Social Services, ECE and Income Maintenance 5112. Telephone is: general inquiry, 705-235-1700. Faxes are: administration unit 705-235-1724; main fax 705-235-1778. Toll free line (within the 705 area code) is 1-800-461-9843.

Change page 161 in the directory.

Award of excellence for Dr. Albin

Dr. Jack Albin (right) has been named the recipient of the 1996 Goldberg Award of Clinical Excellence at CPRI in London, for his commitment to the management of behaviour disorders in children and the creation of the SPIF program (Strategic Parent Intervention Focus). The award is named for, and was presented by, **Dr. Ben Goldberg** (left), a long-time director at CPRI who is now retired.



dialogue

Ontario Community and Social Services

Dialogue is published four times a year by the Communications and Marketing Branch of the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) to provide an information forum for all employees of the ministry. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect ministry or government policy.

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Next issue: Fall 1997
Submission deadline: September 19